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ABSTRACT

This publication describes the professional learning framework for teaching that was developed by the Ontario College of Teachers, a self-regulatory body for the teaching profession in Ontario. The Ontario College of Teachers has a mandate, in legislation, to identify and accredit professional learning programs that support standards of practice for the teaching profession. These programs, when considered together, constitute the core of the professional learning framework. The framework begins with the accredited professional learning offered through preservice teacher education programs in Ontario. Options for ongoing accredited professional learning continue throughout the careers of all members of the College. This report describes the framework, then presents a chart of the promotion of ongoing professional learning in the teaching profession. Next it looks at: the principles and purposes of the framework; learning priorities and choices; professional learning required in legislation; other opportunities for professional growth and development; and the impact of the framework on teacher and student learning. The report offers a reply sheet that focuses on responses to and suggestions for the framework and on professional learning in general. An appendix presents details on standards of practice for the teaching profession. (SM)

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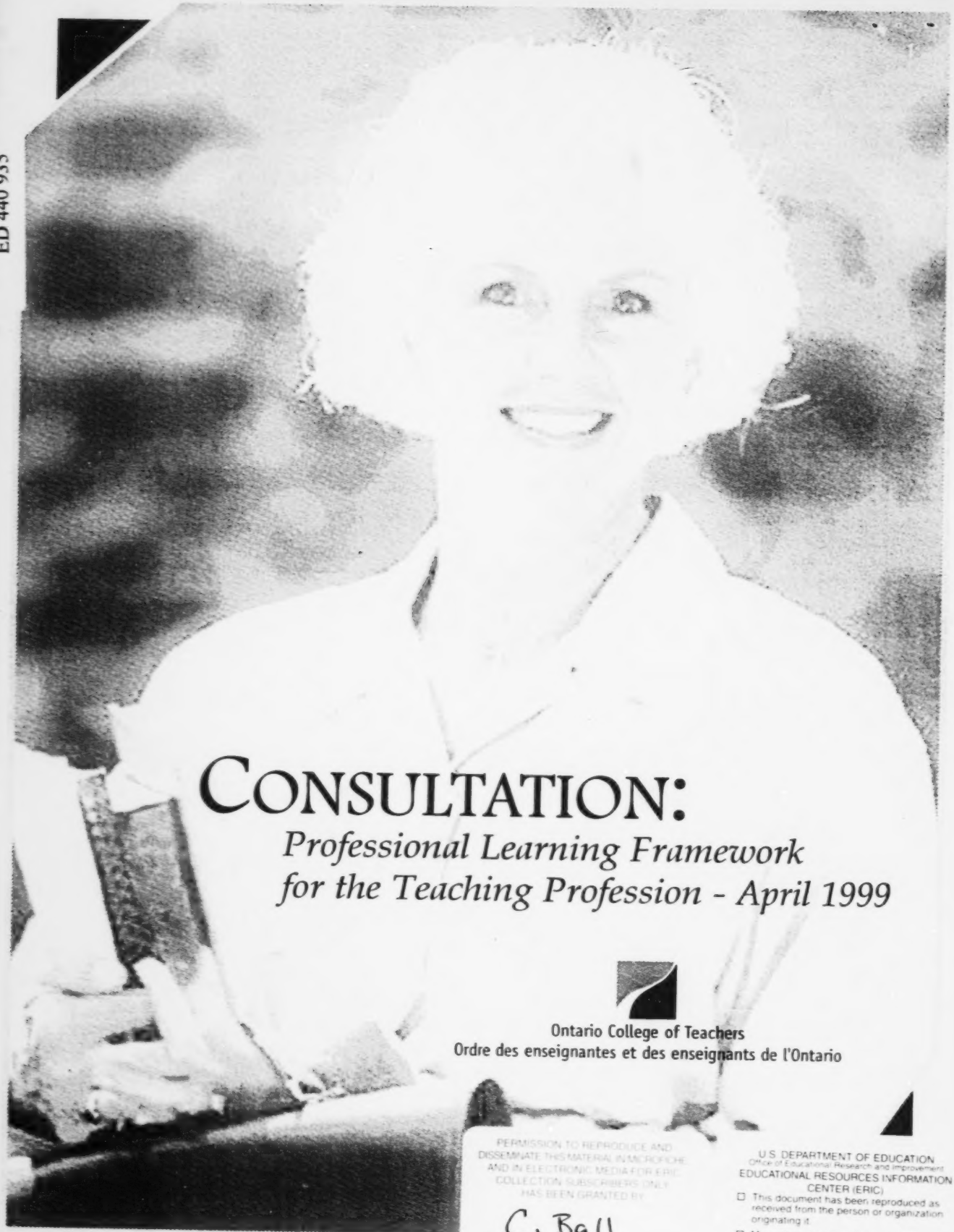

CONSULTATION:

Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession - April 1999

Ontario College of Teachers
Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario

SP039171

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Developing the Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession

The professional learning framework was developed using a variety of sources and resources. Information was drawn from the research literature on what constitutes effective professional learning. Information was also gathered from Ontario teachers and the public. Research was also conducted on the policies and procedures followed by other self-regulatory bodies in Ontario in regard to professional learning.

Hundreds of members of the College and the public contributed to the development of the framework through structured research activities. These activities included focus groups, interviews, surveys and written responses to questions posed on the College web site and in College publications. In addition, many participants offered more informal feedback through e-mail, discussion groups, writing teams and written correspondence.

The College anticipates that this interest in the professional learning framework will continue. The developmental feedback process for this document provides for many more organizations and individuals to engage in the discussion.

A response form has been included with this document on pages 10, 11, 12 and 13. Your input regarding this preliminary draft of the document *The Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* would be valued. In order to ensure your input is part of the data used to refine this draft, please forward your response to the College before December 31, 1999. Responses may be forwarded to:

Douglas Wilson
Manager, Standards of Practice and Education
Ontario College of Teachers
121 Bloor Street East, 6th Floor
Toronto ON M4W 3M5
Facsimile: (416) 961-8822

*Note: You may prefer to leave a response on our web site:

www.oct.on.ca/english/professional_affairs/framework.htm

or

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1

Self-Regulation and the Professional Learning Framework

The Ontario College of Teachers is the self-regulatory body for the teaching profession in Ontario. A self-regulatory body must be able to articulate what it is that makes that professional body unique. In the case of the Ontario College of Teachers it meant answering the question, "What does it mean to be a teacher?" Professional self-regulatory bodies use the term "standards of practice" to refer to the descriptors that answer this kind of question.

Members of a self-regulatory body acquire the knowledge, skills and values that are part of these standards of practice through ongoing professional learning. The Ontario College of Teachers has a mandate, in legislation, to identify and accredit professional learning programs that support the standards of practice for the teaching profession. These programs, when considered together, constitute the core of the professional learning framework.

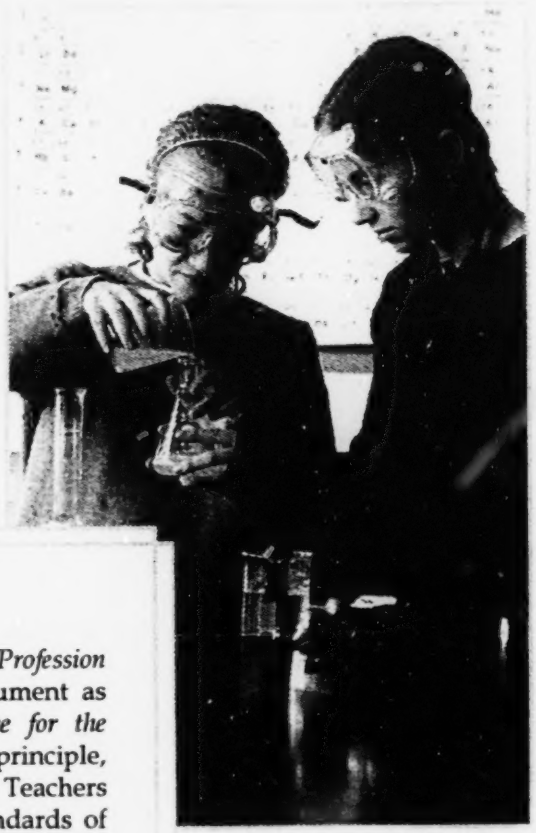
The framework begins with the accredited professional learning offered through pre-service teacher education programs in Ontario. Options for ongoing accredited professional learning continue throughout the careers of all members of the College. Both the pre-service teacher education programs and the accredited programs for in-service are made available only through organizations that have met criteria established by the Ontario College of Teachers.

This means that the Ontario College of Teachers has now assumed, through legislation, the responsibility for the accreditation of pre-service teacher education programs at the faculties of education in Ontario universities. It also means that the College will accredit in-service professional learning. In-service professional learning within the mandate of the College is listed in Regulation 184/97, Teachers Qualifications. This regulation includes programs such as the Additional Qualification courses, the Principal's Qualifications Program and the Supervisory Officer's Qualifications Program. The programs listed in Regulation 184/97 made under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996* may now be identified on the Certificate of Qualification issued to members of the College.

Engaging in ongoing professional learning is recognized in the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* as part of "what it means to be a teacher" in Ontario. The College of Teachers, through the accreditation process for Ontario faculties of education, ensures that pre-service programs are designed to support the standards of practice. Pre-service candidates are required to engage in professional learning defined through the standards of practice.

Members of the College of Teachers will continue to engage in professional learning in order to improve their practice throughout their careers. They do this in a variety of ways. Some teaching assignments require specific academic credits. Some roles, such as the principalship, require certification courses. Movement to a new division may require an Additional Basic Qualification course. Placement in a special education assignment will require a course leading to an Additional Qualification in Special Education. Members of the College participate in many other professional learning activities offered through their professional organizations, federations and subject associations. Members of the College of Teachers also engage in professional learning through their daily practice. Teachers learn every day in the classroom, school, or whatever environment in which they work. Learning is part of teaching. The College of Teachers may also, in future, develop ways to formally recognize and value other forms of professional learning.

Professional learning is at the heart of teacher professionalism. The content of the professional learning may vary. The rationale and resources for learning may vary. The way in which members of the College engage in learning may vary. The constant will be that the programs included in the professional learning framework are directly linked to the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*. Through this framework, the Ontario College of Teachers meets its legislated mandate to "provide for the ongoing education of members of the College." *(Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996,* Part II Subsection 3. (1) paragraph 6)



Note:

The *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* are included with this consultation document as "Appendix A". *The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* were approved, in principle, by the Council of the Ontario College of Teachers in December 1998. Responses to the standards of practice during the validation period will be considered by the Standards of Practice and Education Committee in October 1999.

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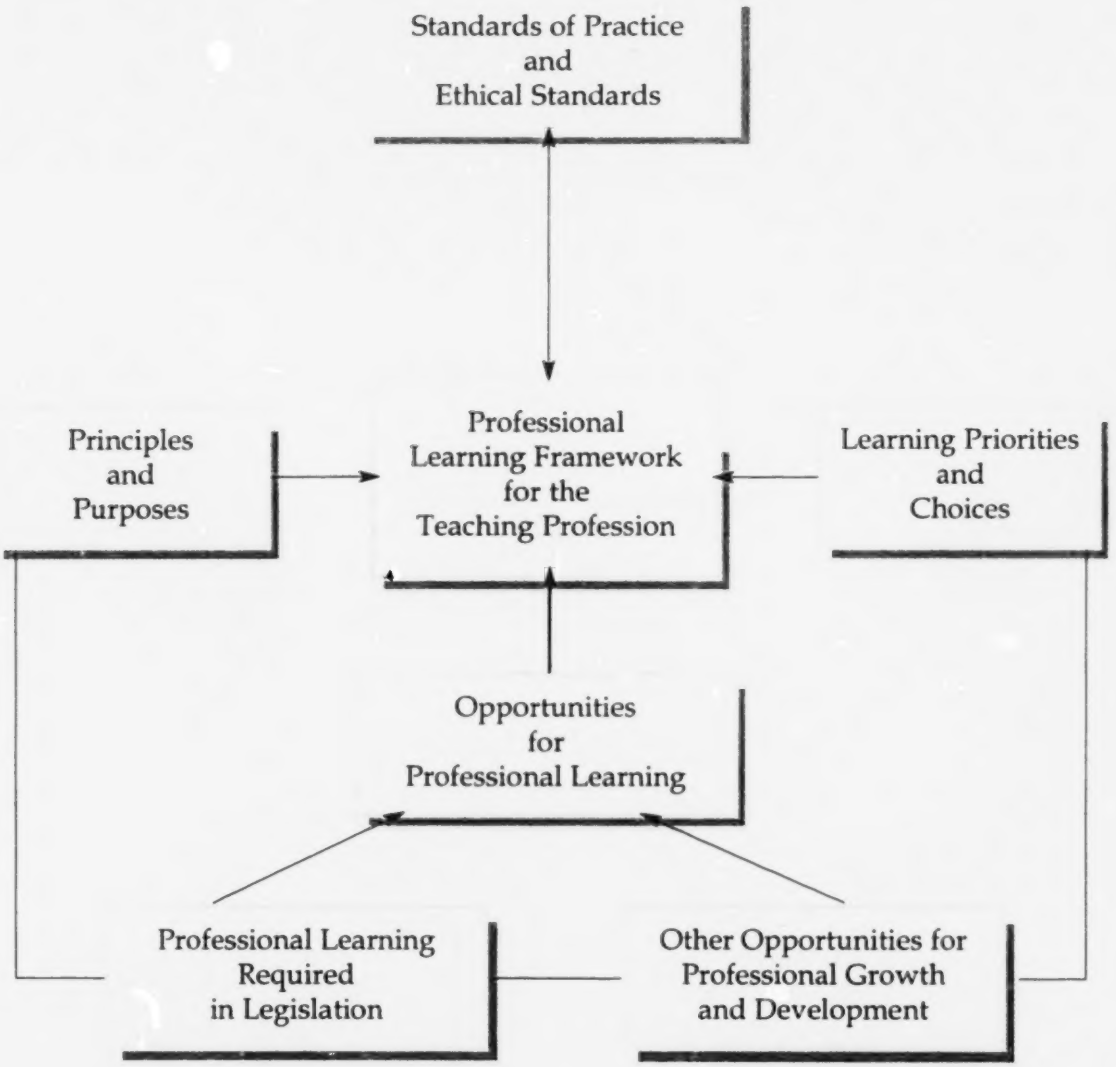
Promoting Ongoing Professional Learning in the Teaching Profession


Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards
Principles and Purposes
Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession
Learning Priorities and Choices
Opportunities for Professional Learning
Professional Learning Required in Legislation
Other Opportunities for Professional Growth and Development

Principles

The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* supports the following principles:

- **The goal of professional learning is the ongoing improvement of practice. Teacher learning is directly correlated to student learning.**
  The professional learning framework encourages targeted learning activities based on system needs, personal growth needs and student learning needs. The framework also encourages teachers to identify and pursue their strengths and personal interests in their professional learning. The overall purpose of professional learning, however, should be the enhancement of student learning.

- **Standards-based professional learning provides for an integrated approach to teacher education.**
  The *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* describe "what it means to be a teacher". All programs and professional learning activities accredited by the College must be designed to support the profession's standards of practice.

- **Effective professional learning is based on learning principles.**
  The professional learning framework recognizes the multiplicity of learning needs. The framework acknowledges career and personal priorities of teachers. The framework includes professional learning opportunities that are varied, flexible and accessible in order to meet the different needs of teachers.

- **Teachers plan for and reflect on their professional learning.**
  The professional learning framework has been designed to reflect the understanding that teachers are competent, committed to life-long learning, and dedicated in their efforts to ensure that the students in Ontario classrooms also become life-long learners and contributing members of Ontario society. The framework helps guide teachers' reflection on key learning events in their careers. The framework encourages teachers to set and to revise short-term and long-term learning goals. It helps teachers plan ongoing learning activities to improve practice and to enhance student learning.

- **Learning is enhanced through the creation and sustaining of learning communities.**
  The professional learning framework encourages collaboration, mentoring and partnering in learning activities. The framework provides a common context for teachers in different roles and at different career and life stages. The professional learning framework supports ongoing commitment to the improvement of teacher competence as an individual and collective responsibility.

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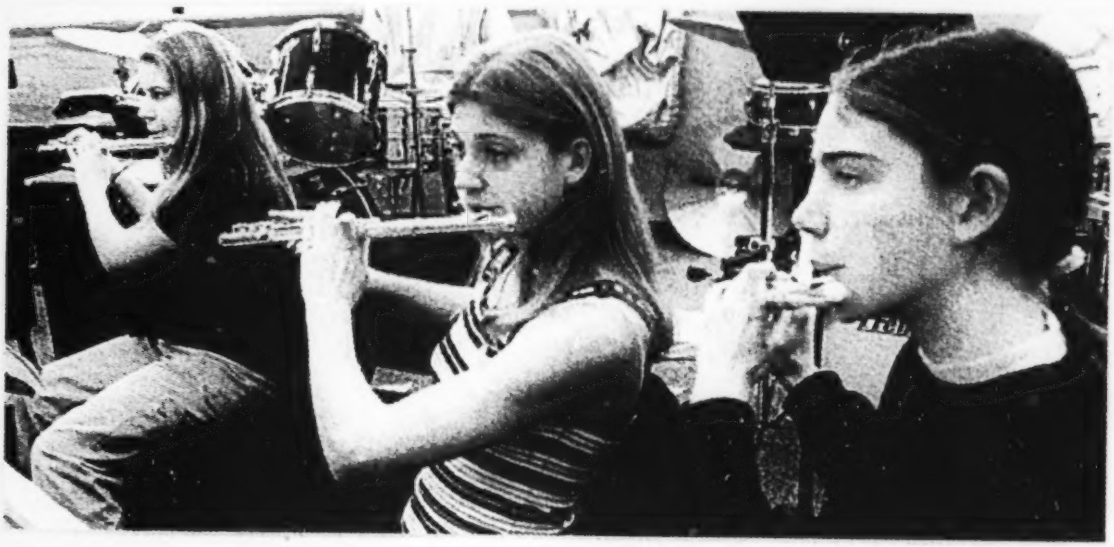
Purposes

The College of Teachers provides for the ongoing education of its members through the options included in the professional learning framework. The College will ensure that all options included in the framework support the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*.



The professional learning framework will:

- highlight a range of options to improve practice and enhance student learning
- identify those programs and professional learning activities accredited or approved by the College
- illustrate pathways for professional learning for the teaching profession in order to facilitate ongoing personal and professional growth
- provide a common language to facilitate understanding and communication of professional learning experiences
- acknowledge the commitment members of the teaching profession make to professional learning
- help teachers identify, collect, reflect upon and celebrate their learning experiences and accomplishments.

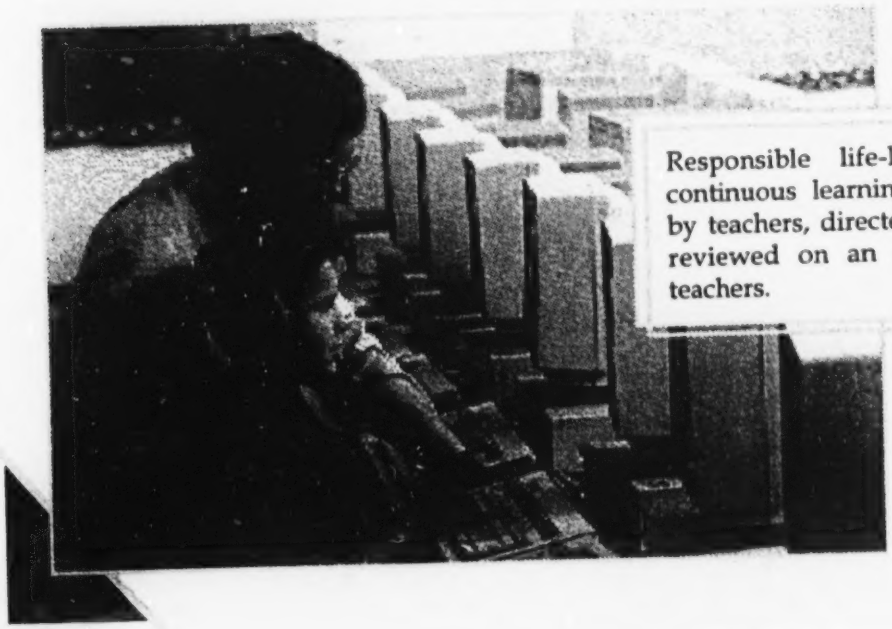
The professional learning framework assures the profession and the public that teachers have the opportunity through professional learning to remain competent throughout their careers.

Learning Priorities and Choices

The challenge for teachers today is how to maintain and advance their professional competence in a rapidly changing education environment. Teachers engage in professional learning for a variety of reasons. The range of priorities listed below reflects the complexity of the teaching profession.

- Teachers engage in professional learning to meet student needs.
- Teachers beginning their careers at a faculty of education or upgrading their teaching qualifications must undertake learning required by policy or legislation.
- Teachers working in district school boards, private schools or other employment situations are expected to undertake learning recommended by employers or the Ministry of Education.
- Teachers choose to be involved in professional learning of personal interest to them.
- Teachers collaborate and learn from others in the professional community.
- Teachers recognize that professional learning specific to the use of technology in education is now a reality. Interactive technology, for some teachers, will present new challenges and options for professional learning.
- Teachers may also choose to engage in learning in the broader community.

The professional learning framework recognizes that, in addition to a wide range of priorities for learning, teachers make choices about how and when they engage in professional learning. The framework includes opportunities for both individualized and collaborative learning. It also has sufficient flexibility to accommodate the career and life stages of teachers.



Responsible life-long learning is continuous learning that is initiated by teachers, directed by teachers and reviewed on an ongoing basis by teachers.

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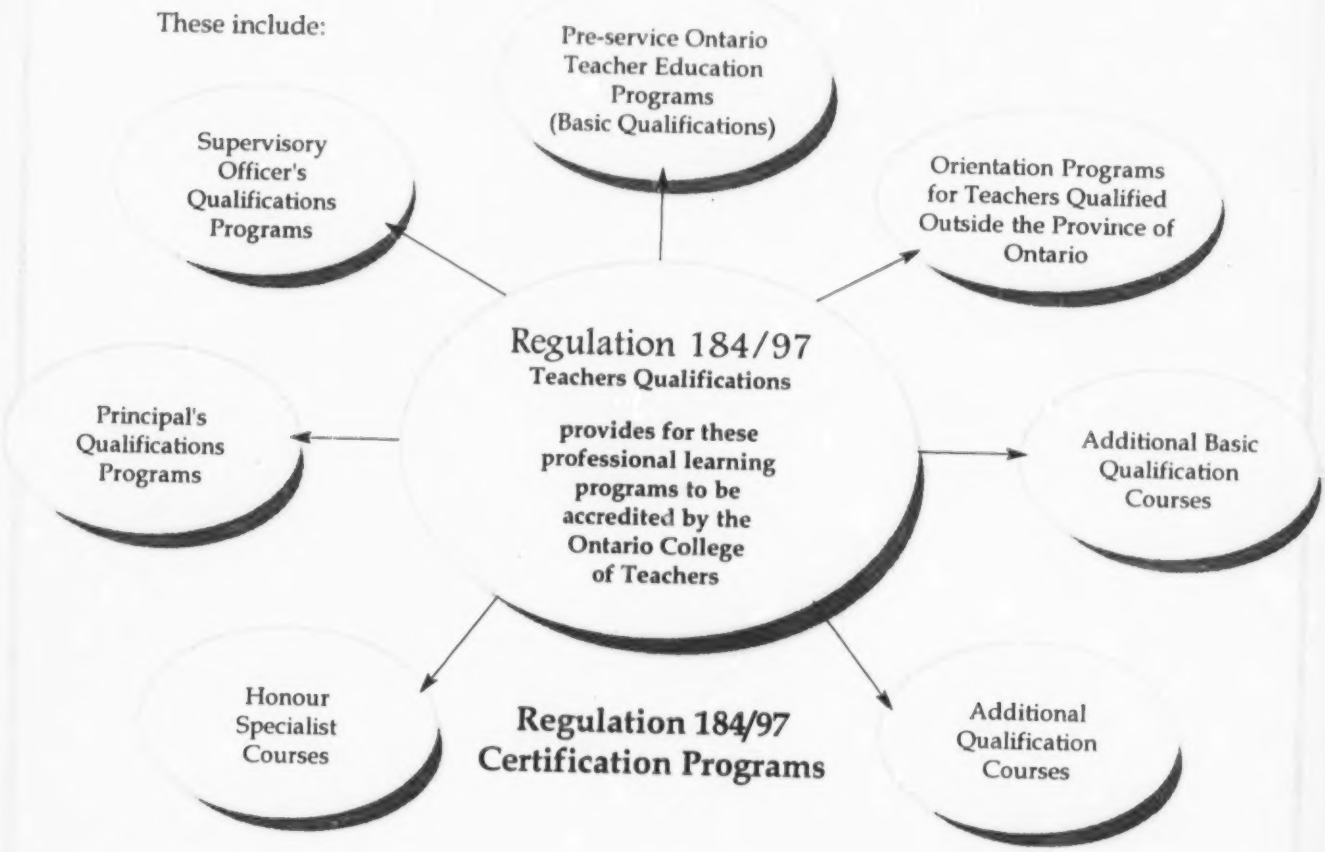
Professional Learning Required in Legislation

Regulation 184/97 Teachers Qualifications

Regulation 184/97 Teachers Qualifications made under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996* identifies those programs now formally recognized by the Ontario College of Teachers.


These include:
Pre-service Ontario Teacher Education Programs (Basic Qualifications)
Supervisory Officer's Qualifications Programs
Orientation Programs for Teachers Qualified Outside the Province of Ontario
Regulation 184/97
Teachers Qualifications
provides for these professional learning programs to be accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers
Principal's Qualifications Programs
Additional Basic Qualification Courses
Honour Specialist Courses
Regulation 184/97 Certification Programs
Additional Qualification Courses

Teachers who successfully complete a program listed in Regulation 184/97 Teachers Qualifications will find the program listed on their Certificate of Qualification.

Other Opportunities for Professional Growth and Development

Teachers engage in many forms of professional learning. In future, the College may develop ways to formally recognize and value forms of professional learning beyond those listed in Regulation 184/97 made under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996.*

These opportunities might include:

Academic Programs

Currently the Certificate of Qualification includes only completed degree programs.

Teachers may choose to:

- participate in programs or courses offered through universities, colleges or other institutions or organizations that do not always lead to academic degrees.

These programs may be prerequisites to enrollment in the certification programs listed in Regulation 184/97.

Professional Networks

Teachers may choose to:

- partner with business, industry, colleges and universities
- participate in subject and professional councils
- join with other teachers or groups to discuss professional issues
- participate in a local school community committee or school council.

Mentoring or Coaching

Teachers may choose to:

- serve as an associate teacher
- mentor a new teacher
- find a mentor
- learn with colleagues through observation and feedback, co-operative planning and problem solving.

Learning through Practice

Teachers may choose to:

- develop and implement curriculum materials
- participate in collaborative inquiry
- conduct action research
- engage in professional dialogue
- organize a study group
- pilot new initiatives.

Research Activities

Teachers may choose to:

- inquire into teaching practice and identify research questions
- plan and conduct research activities to enhance teaching and learning
- work collaboratively with others to contribute to the knowledge base of teaching and learning
- explore ways to access and use educational research.

Professional Activities

Teachers may choose to:

- visit other educational settings
- develop a reading list
- create curriculum materials and share with other colleagues
- participate in curriculum writing and/or assessment projects
- maintain a professional portfolio.

Professional Contributions

Teachers may choose to:

- participate in, present at, or organize conferences, workshops and institutes
- contribute to a professional publication.

Technology and Learning

Teachers may choose to:

- engage in learning using computer, telecommunication, videoconferencing, CD-ROM and videodisc technology
- join a listserv or research on the Internet.

Teachers may choose to determine other options for learning beyond these examples.

9

The Professional Learning Framework: Teacher and Student Learning

The professional learning framework supports the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and provides a range of options to promote continuing competence among members of the College. It ensures that there are learning opportunities to assist teachers to grow professionally throughout their careers. The framework has been designed to reflect the understanding that teachers are competent, committed to lifelong learning, and dedicated in their efforts to ensure that the students in Ontario classrooms also become life-long learners and contributing members of society.

Please Comment

1. What is your overall response to the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession?*

2. Please highlight any specific comment(s) or suggestion(s) you have regarding the professional learning framework. Please indicate clearly which part of the framework you are addressing.

3. Please add and clearly describe any professional learning activities that have not been acknowledged and should be added.

4. In the future, to what extent do you think the professional learning framework will act as a guide in helping you plan your professional learning? Please explain.

5. How would you like your professional learning to be
(a) recognized?

(b) valued?

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Prescribed Learning

Subsection 40. (1) and paragraph 24 of Part IX of the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996* state:

"40. (1) Subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council and with prior review by the Minister, the Council may make regulations,"

"24. prescribing ongoing education requirements for members;"

6a. What are your thoughts about prescribed learning?

6b. If the Ontario College of Teachers prescribes ongoing education requirements for its members, please describe the forms of required learning (beyond Regulation 184/97 made under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996*) which would be most helpful to you as a teaching professional.

Responses may be forwarded to:

Douglas Wilson
Manager, Standards of Practice and Education
Ontario College of Teachers
121 Bloor Street East, 6th Floor
Toronto ON M4W 3M5
Facsimile: (416) 961-8822

**Note: You may prefer to leave a response on our web site:*

www.oct.on.ca/english/professional_affairs/framework.htm

or

www.oct.on.ca/french/professional_affairs/framework.htm

Appendix A

Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession

The following five statements comprise the standards of practice for the teaching profession. The key elements expand on these statements.

Commitment to Students and Student Learning
Teachers demonstrate care for and commitment to students. They are dedicated to engaging and supporting student learning. Teachers treat students equitably and with respect. They encourage students to grow as individuals and as contributing members of society. Teachers assist students to become life-long learners.

Professional Knowledge
Professional knowledge is the foundation for teaching practice. Teachers know the curriculum, the subject matter, the student, and teaching practice. They know education-related legislation, methods for communication, and ways to teach in a changing world.

Teaching Practice
Teachers apply professional knowledge and understanding of the student, curriculum, teaching and the changing context of the learning environment to promote student learning. They conduct ongoing assessment and evaluation of student progress. Teachers modify and refine teaching practice through continuous reflection.

Leadership and Community
Teachers are educational leaders who create and sustain learning communities in their classrooms, in their schools, and in their profession. They collaborate with their colleagues and other professionals, with parents, and with other members of the community to enhance school programs and student learning.

Ongoing Professional Learning
Teachers are learners who acknowledge the interdependence of teacher learning and student learning. Teachers engage in a continuum of professional growth to improve their practice.

Key Elements

Commitment to Students and Student Learning

1. **Demonstration of care and commitment**
   Teachers:
   (a) use the curriculum and available resources to support students in their learning;
   (b) model for students the curiosity, enthusiasm and joy of learning;
   (c) help students appreciate their own identity, to learn more of their cultural heritage, and to build self-esteem;
   (d) demonstrate concern for student character, peer relationships, and personal aspirations; and
   (e) reinforce the rights and responsibilities students have as citizens.

2. **Support for student learning**
   Teachers:
   (a) understand and use a range of teaching methods to address learning, cultural, spiritual, and language differences, and family situations;
   (b) develop programs for students that incorporate a knowledge and understanding of human development and learning theory; and
   (c) use a variety of available resources to support curriculum expectations.

3. **Equitable and respectful treatment**
   Teachers:
   (a) accommodate the differences in students and respect their diversity;
   (b) help students to connect learning to their own life experiences and spiritual and cultural understandings; and
   (c) provide a range of ways for students to demonstrate aptitudes, abilities and learning.

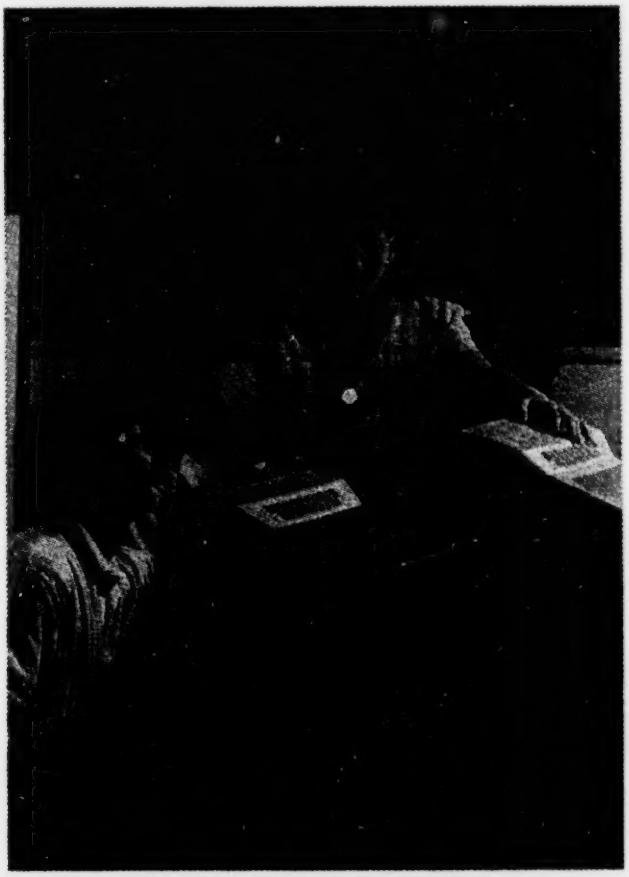
4. **Growing as individuals and as contributing members of society**
   Teachers:
   (a) encourage students to become active, inquisitive and discerning citizens;
   (b) create opportunities for students to understand, facilitate and respond to change; and
   (c) engage students in activities that encourage diverse approaches and solutions but also reinforce the social responsibilities students have as citizens.

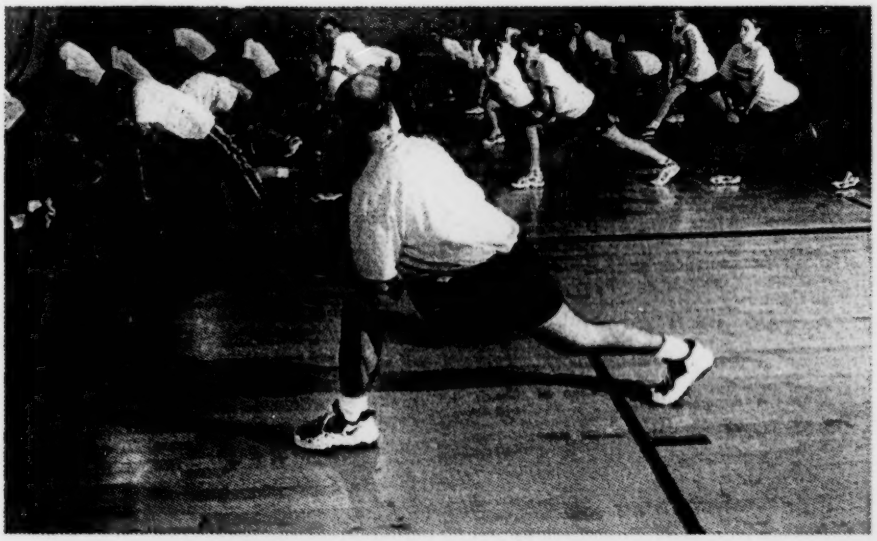
5. **Assistance in becoming life-long learners**
   Teachers:
   (a) link the curriculum and learning experiences to everyday life;
   (b) encourage students to know about, reflect on and monitor their own learning; and
   (c) assist students to develop and use ways to access and critically assess information.

Professional Knowledge

1. **Knowledge of the student**
   Teachers know:
   (a how differences arising from cultural heritage, language, family, gender, community and other factors shape experience and impact on learning;
   (b) how to recognize strengths and weaknesses of students;
   (c) how teaching is shaped by what is known about human development and learning; and
   (d) that teaching students with exceptionalities requires the use of specialized knowledge and skills.

2. **Knowledge of the curriculum**
   Teachers know:
   (a) the subject matter;
   (b how knowledge in their subject area is created, linked to other subjects and applied to life experiences;
   (c) the curriculum relevant to their subject(s); and
   (d) ways to connect curriculum expectations to curriculum resources and technologies.





3. **Knowledge of teaching practice**
   Teachers know ways to:
   (a) make knowledge and skills accessible to others;
   (b) shape instruction so that it is helpful to students who learn in a variety of ways;
   (c) motivate students;
   (d) establish and modify instructional settings;
   (e) manage time for instruction;
   (f) establish classroom management strategies that support learning and respect the dignity of students;
   (g) collaborate and structure interaction among students to ensure that shared learning, as well as individual learning, occurs;
   (h) assess and evaluate student learning, student approaches to learning and the achievement of curriculum expectations; and
   (i) communicate and collaborate with parents and others involved in the education of students.

4. **Knowledge of the learning environment**
   Teachers know ways to identify and respond to:
   (a) the factors in a diverse and changing society that impact on instruction;
   (b) provincial legislation, local policies and procedures, and community norms that guide the decisions they make; and
   (c) change as they engage in the change process.

Teaching Practice

1. **The student**
   Teachers planning for instruction:
   (a) apply knowledge of student backgrounds, experiences and learning styles;
   (b) apply knowledge of how students develop and learn;
   (c) apply knowledge of a student's physical, social and cognitive development;
   (d) respond to learning exceptionalities and special needs;
   (e) adapt teaching practice based on student achievement; and
   (f) collaborate with professional colleagues to benefit student learning.

2. **Curriculum**
   Teachers:
   (a) adapt the methods of inquiry, content knowledge and skills required in the curriculum;
   (b) link content and skills to everyday life experiences; and
   (c) integrate a variety of teaching and learning strategies, activities and resources.

3. **Teaching and the changing context of the learning environment**
   Teachers:
   (a) carry out their duties as outlined in legislation;
   (b) establish a safe and supportive learning environment;
   (c) establish and maintain standards for student behaviour;
   (d) enhance the learning environment with a variety of curriculum resources and available technologies;
   (e) organize time and space to enrich the learning environment;
   (f) develop student activities to promote social and group responsibilities;
   (g) use classroom management skills to enhance learning; and
   (h) apply teaching strategies to meet student needs.

4. **Assessment and evaluation of students**
   Teachers :
   (a) communicate clear, challenging and achievable expectations for students;
   (b) gather data on student performance using a variety of assessment strategies;
   (c) keep a continuous and comprehensive record of group and individual achievement; and
   (d) report and provide ongoing feedback of individual achievement to students and parents.

5. **Reflection**
   Teachers :
   (a) integrate curriculum expectations into current teaching practice;
   (b) reflect on current practice to determine if needs of individuals and groups of students are being met; and
   (c) modify and refine teaching practice using a variety of sources and resources.

Leadership and Community

1. **Responsibility and service**
   Teachers:
   (a) acknowledge the responsibility of their position;
   (b) build trust with students, parents and the community; and
   (c) exercise professional integrity and judgement.

2. **Creation of a learning community**
   Teachers:
   (a) learn with and from their students, colleagues and others in communities of learners;
   (b) motivate and inspire through sharing their vision;
   (c) create opportunities for students to share their learning with their classmates, schoolmates, parents and the community; and
   (d) reach out to parents and to diverse local communities inviting them to share their knowledge and skills in supporting classroom and school activities.

3. **Sustaining learning through innovation and change**
   Teachers:
   (a) innovate and effect change through decision-making, initiating change, and evaluating and communicating results;
   (b) engage others through shared problem-solving and conflict resolution;
   (c) act both as team members and as team leaders; and
   (d) acknowledge and celebrate effort and success.

21

Ongoing Professional Learning

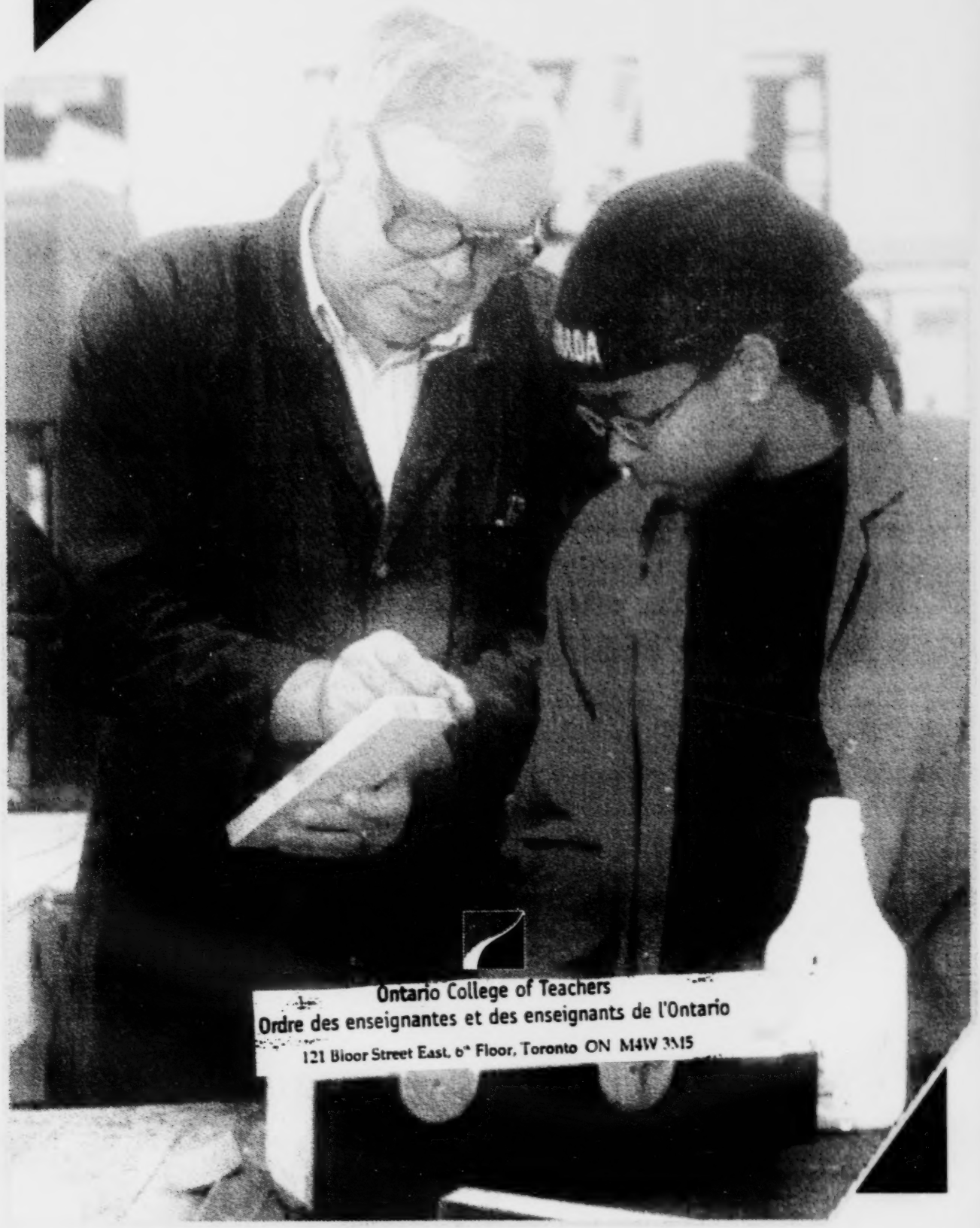
1. **Teacher learning and student learning**
   Teachers:
   (a) understand that teacher learning is directly related to student learning;
   (b) act as role models who demonstrate lifelong learning; and
   (c) engage in a variety of learning opportunities both individual and collaborative that are integrated into practice for the benefit of student learning.

2. **Professional growth**
   Teachers:
   (a) recognize that continuous professional growth is an integral part of teaching;
   (b) recognize that teaching and professional growth are influenced by personal, social and educational contexts;
   (c) understand that teaching practice is enhanced by many forms of knowledge, ways of knowing and ways to access that knowledge; and
   (d) anticipate and plan the kinds of learning they will need to respond to a variety of educational contexts.

3. **Improving practice**
   Teachers:
   (a) demonstrate a commitment to continued professional growth;
   (b) know that professional learning is most effective when it is job-embedded, relevant and supported by others within the educational community;
   (c) reflect on their practice and learn from experience;
   (d) draw on and contribute, where appropriate, to various forms of educational research to improve their practice; and
   (e) collaborate with colleagues to enhance student learning.

Notes

Notes



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